

when the avenger of blood was hard at his heels, therefore it is a running for one's life; a running with all might and main.

(2) This running is called a *pressing*: I *PRESS towards the mark*: (Phil. iii. 14.) which signifies that they that will have heaven, must not stick at any difficulties, but press, croud, and thrust thro' all that may stand between heaven and their souls. So run.

(3) This running is called in another place, a continuing in the way of life. If you *CONTINUE* in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away, Col. i. 23. not to run a little now and then, by fits and starts, or half way, or almost thither; but to run for my life, and to continue to the end of the race, which must be to the end of my life. First, because many run, yea, run far too, who yet miss of the crown, that stands at the end of the race. You know that all, who run in a race, do not win; and so it is here. What, do you think that every professor will have heaven? What, every lazy one, that scarce runneth so fast heaven-ward, as a snail creepeth on the ground?—2. Because the man that runs, if he does not obtain the prize, loses his labour. And ah! how many such runners will there be found at the day of judgment! Multitudes come to heaven's gates, and there stand crying, Lord, Lord, when they have nothing but rebukes for their pains: depart from me: you come too late: you run too lazily: the door is shut. O sad state of those that run and miss! Therefore, if you will have heaven, you must run for it. So run that you may obtain.—3. Because the way is long: there is much work to do: there are many steps to be taken by those, that intend to be saved. Out of Egypt thou must run a long journey thro' the vast wilderness, before thou come to the land of Promise.

(4) They that will go to heaven must run for it, because, as the way is long, so time, in which they are to get at the end of it, is very uncertain. When death comes, away thou must go, whether thou art provided or not; and therefore look to it; it is not good dallying with the salvation or damnation of thy soul.

(5) They that will have heaven, must run for it; because the devil followeth them. He goeth about, seeking whom he may devour; and I will assure you, the devil is nimble: he can run apace; he has overtaken many, turned up their heels; and given them an everlasting fall. Hell also has a wide mouth: it can stretch itself farther than you are aware of: and as the angel said to Lot, Look not behind thee, neither tarry thou in all the plain, lest thou be consumed; so say I to thee, Take heed, tarry not, lest the devil, hell, death, and the fearful curses of the law overtake thee, and throw thee down in the midst of thy sins, so as never to rise again. If this were well considered, then thou, as well as I, wouldst say, They that will have heaven, must run for it.

(6) They must run for it, because, perchance, the gates of heaven may be shut shortly. *I shut, and no man can open*, says Christ. If thou shouldst come but one quarter of an hour too late, I tell thee, it will cost thee an eternity to bewail thy misery in. Francis Spira can tell thee, what it is to stay till the gates of mercy be quite shut; or to run so lazily, that they be shut, before thou get within them. What, to be shut out! What, out of heaven! Sinner, rather than lose it, run for it.

Lastly, So run, that thou mayst obtain; because, if thou lose, thou lovest soul, Christ, heaven, &c. Besides, thou layest thyself open to the shame and reproach, that God, Christ, saints, &c. can lay upon thee. All, that go by, will begin to mock at thee, saying, This man began to run well, but was not able to finish.

D I R E C T I O N S.

I. If thou wouldst so run, as to obtain the kingdom of heaven, get into the way. It is not simply the runner, nor yet the hasty runner, that winneth the crown, unless he be in the way, that leads thereto. There is a great running to and fro, and yet every one is for his life, his soul. If you say, Which is the way? Jesus says, *I am the way*, &c. So then thy business is, (if thou wouldst have salvation) to see if thou art planted in him, hast faith in him, so

as to make a life out of him, and to conform thee to him. For the Lord's sake, take heed. Do not think, thou art in the way upon too slight grounds: for if thou miss the way, thou wilt miss the prize, and lose thy soul. Mistrust thy own strength: down on thy knees in prayer to the Lord, for the Spirit of truth: search the word for direction; flee seducers; keep company with the christians, that have most experience of Christ; have a care of relying on outward obedience.

DIR. II. Be much in studying the way: what Christ is: what he has done; why he is; why he has done what is done; and what he does in heaven. Be thinking also of those places, to which thou must not come near. Avoid such things as are expressly forbidden in the word of God. *Withdraw thy foot from her, for her steps take hold of hell*, Prov. v. And so of every thing that is not in the way. So run.

DIR. III. Strip thyself of those things, that may hinder thee in the way to heaven; as covetousness, pride, lust, or whatever else thy heart may be inclined unto, which may hinder thee in this heavenly race. Men, that run for a wager, do not incumber themselves. Every man that striveth for the mastery, is temperate in all things. It is but a vain thing to talk of going to heaven, if thou let thy heart be incumbered with those things, that would hinder.

DIR. IV. Beware of bye-paths: take heed of all crooked paths, that lead to damnation. Some of them are dangerous because of practice, some because of opinion. But look right before thee; ponder the path of thy feet; turn not to the right hand, nor to the left; remove thy foot far from evil. This counsel not being taken, is the reason of that reeling this way, and that way, and so missing the way to the kingdom. The way to heaven is hard to be found, and as hard to be kept in. Yet as the harlot's house at Jericho was known by one scarlet thread, so the streams of Christ's blood run throughout the way to heaven: mind that; have boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus.

DIR. V. Do not look too high. If thou be prying over-

overmuch into God's secret decrees, thou mayest stumble and fall, as many hundreds have done.

DIR. VI. Have not an ear open to every one that calleth after you. If men run for some great matter, they say, I am running for a wager: if I win, I am made: if I lose, I am undone: hinder me not. Thus shouldst thou do, and thou hast mere cause than they: for as much as they run but for things that last not; but thou, for an incorruptible glory. I give thee notice of this, knowing that thou shalt have enough to call after thee, even the devil, sin, pleasures, profits, ease, pride, &c. one crying, Stay for me; the other saying, Do not leave me: and a third, Take me along with you. Let not thine ear be opened for such sink-souls. You know what it cost the young man, that was enticed by a harlot, Prov. vii. Many strong men have been slain, that is, kept out of heaven by her. Soul, take this counsel and say, Satan, sin, pleasure, profit, &c. let me alone: stand off: come not nigh me: for I am running for heaven, for my soul, for God, for Christ; from hell and everlasting damnation. If I win, I win all; and if I lose, I lose all: let me alone. So run.

DIR. VII. Be not daunted, though thou meetest with ever so many discouragements in thy journey. Encourage thyself with the tender-heartedness of Christ, the merits of his blood, the freeness of his invitations to come in. If these be not thy meditations, thou wilt draw very heavily, if thou do not give up all for lost, and so knock off from following any farther.

DIR. VIII. Take heed of being offended at the cross, that thou must go by. If thou art in the way to the kingdom, my soul for thine, you will come at the cross shortly. The Lord grant thou dost not shrink at it, so as to turn thee back again. The cross stands as a way-mark to heaven, thou must go close by it; nay, thou must take it up, or else thou wilt quickly go out of the way that leads to heaven, and turn aside to some of those crooked lanes, that lead down to the chambers of death.

The cross is known (1) in the doctrine of *justification*

cation. It stretches every vein in a man's heart, to be willing, in the very midst of the sense of his sins, to throw himself wholly upon the righteousness of another. (2) In the doctrine of *mortification*. Is it nothing for a man to lay hands on his darling sins, that stick as close to him as the flesh does to the bone? If this were an easy matter, what need of all these prayers, sighs, watchings? Nay, do you not see that some men, before they will set about this work, they will even venture the loss of heaven, Christ and all? I assure you, to cut off right hands, and pluck out right eyes, is no pleasure to the flesh. (3) In the doctrine of *perseverance*. It is no great matter to begin to look for heaven, to begin to seek the Lord, to begin to shun sin; but it is a very great matter to continue with God's approbation. My servant Caleb, says God, has followed me, he has continually followed me *fully*; *he shall possess the land*, Numb. xiv. 24. Almost all the many thousands of the children of Israel fell short of perseverance, when they walked from Egypt towards the land of Canaan. Indeed they went to the work at first pretty willingly, but they were quickly out of breath. It is an easy matter for a man to run a mile or two: O but to hold out for a thousand miles! he that does this, must look to meet with the cross. Perseverance is a very great part of the cross. I could point out many, that after they had followed the ways of God three or four years, have been beat out of wind, have taken up their lodgings and rest, before they have got half way to heaven; some in this, and some in that sin; and have secretly, nay, sometimes openly said, The way is too strait, the race too long, the religion too holy, I can go no farther. It is the cross, which keeps those which are kept from heaven. It is that which spoileth all. Some, when they come at the cross, can go no farther: others stumble at it, and break their necks; others turn aside to the left hand or to the right, and so think to get to heaven another way. Therefore if thou meet the cross in thy journey, in what manner

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soever it be, take courage; knowing that by the cross is the way to the kingdom.

DIR. IX. Beg of God, that he would enlighten thine understanding, and enflame thy will. When men come to see what a heaven there is to be enjoyed, it will make them run thro' thick and thin. When a man's will is fully set to do a thing, it must be a very hard matter that shall hinder that man from bringing about his end. Ye self-willed people, no body knows what to do with you. We say, He will have his own will, do all that we can. A man that is resolved says, I will do my best to advantage myself; I will do my worst to hinder my enemies; I will have it, or I will lose my life. Though he kill me, yet will I trust in him. I will not let thee go, except thou blest me. I will, I will, I will; O this blessed inflamed will for heaven! What is like it? I tell you the will is all! that is one of the chiefest things, which turns the wheel either backwards or forwards; and God knoweth that full well, and so does the devil, and therefore they both endeavour very much to strengthen the will of their servants. God is for making of his a willing people to serve him: and the devil does what he can to possess the will of those that are his, with the love of sin: and therefore when Christ comes close to the matter, he says, You will not come to me. How often would I have gathered you, as a hen does her chickens, but ye would not. O therefore cry hard to God, to inflame thy will for heaven and Christ. Get thy will tipt with heavenly grace, and resolution against all discouragements, and thou goest full speed for heaven. But if thou faulter in thy will, thou wilt run halting all the way, and also to be sure, thou wilt fall short at last. The Lord give thee a will and courage!

Before I take my leave of thee, let me give thee a few MOTIVES along with thee. It may be, they will be as good as a pair of spurs, to prick on thy lumpsish heart in this rich voyage. (1) If thou winnest, then heaven, yea, life eternal is thine; and if thou lovest, then thy loss is heaven; besides, thou procurest

curest eternal death, with the everlasting damnation of thy own soul. (2) Death and damnation follow after thee as hard as they can drive, and therefore, for the Lord's sake make haste. (3) If they seize upon thee before thou get to the city of refuge, they will put an everlasting stop to thy journey. This also cries, Run for it. (4) Now heaven's gates, with Christ's arms, are wide open to receive thee. This consideration should make thee reach out, and fly with all speed. (5) Keep thine eye upon the prize. Be sure that thine eyes be continually upon the profit thou art like to get. The reason why men faint in their race to heaven, lieth chiefly in either of these two things: First, they do not seriously consider the worth of the prize: they must lose heaven for want of considering the worth of it. That thou mayest not do the like, keep thy eye much upon the comfort, that is to be had there by those that win the prize. This made the Apostle run through any thing, peril by sea, and peril by land, &c. It made also others endure to be stoned, fawn asunder, thrown to the wild beasts. Secondly, do not say in thy heart, This is too good for me: for I tell thee, heaven is prepared for all who will accept of it; therefore take heart and run, man. (6) Think much of them that are gone before. When my base heart has been inclining to loiter in my way towards heaven, the very consideration of the glorious saints and angels in heaven, what they enjoy, how they would befool me, if they knew that my heart was drawing back, has caused me to rush forward, and say to my soul, Come, soul, let us see what this heaven is: let us even venture for it, and try if that will quit our cost. O therefore throw away striking lusts, follow after righteousness, love the Lord Jesus: I'll warrant thee, he will give thee a goodly recompense. (7) Set to work, and when thou hast run thyself down weary, the Lord Jesus will take thee up and carry thee. Is not this enough to make any poor soul to begin his race? Fathers encouraging their children say, Run, sweet babe, until thou art weary, and then I will carry thee. He will

will gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom. When they are weary, they shall ride, —Or else he will convey new strength into thy soul, which will be as well. *The young men shall utterly fail, but they that wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength.* Isa. xl. 30, 31. (8) The devil will lose no time, spare no pains, neither will his servants, to seek the destruction of themselves and others; and shall not we be as industrious for our own salvation? Shall the world venture the damnation of their souls, for a corruptible crown: and shall not we venture the loss of a few trifles, for an eternal crown? Shall they venture the loss of eternal friends, as God to love, Christ to redeem, the Holy Spirit to comfort, heaven for habitation, saints and angels for company, and all this to hold communion with sin, and a few drunken, lying, covetous wretches like themselves? And shall not we labour as hard, run as fast, seek as diligently, nay, a hundred times more diligently, for the company of those glorious and eternal friends? Shall it be said at the last day, That wicked men made more haste to hell, than you did to heaven? O run with all might and main.

Now I come to make some use and application of what has been said. You see, that he who will go to heaven, must run for it; yea, and so run as I have said. Well then, do you so run. And now let us examine a little. Art thou got into the right way? Art thou in Christ's righteousness! Search: when wast thou turned out of thy sins, into the righteousness of Jesus Christ? Dost thou see thyself in him? Is he more precious to thee than all the world? Is thy mind always musing on him? Dost thou love to be talking of him? and walking with him? Dost thou count all things lifeless, empty, vain, without communion with him? Does his company sweeten, and his absence embitter all things? Soul, be serious; and do not take things of such weighty concern as the salvation or damnation of thy soul, without good ground.

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(1) Art thou unladen of pride, pleasures, profits, lusts? What! Dost thou think to run fast enough, with thy sins and lusts in thy heart? I tell thee, soul, they, that have laid all aside, every weight, every sin, and are got into the nimblest posture, find work enough so to run as to hold out. Art thou therefore unladen of these things? Never talk of going to heaven, if thou art not. It is to be feared thou wilt be found among those many, that will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

(2) If so, what will become of them, that are grown weary, before they are got half way? Why, man, it is he, that holdeth out to the end, that shall be saved; it is he that OVERCOMETH, that shall inherit all things: it is not every one that begins. Agrippa slept fair enough, but he slept short. Methinks I have seen how these poor wretches, that get but almost to heaven, shall cry out in hell, saying, I was almost a christian, I was almost got into the kingdom, almost out of my sins, almost from under the curse of God; *almost*, but not *altogether*. O that I should be almost at heaven, and should not go quite through!

(3) What will become of them, that some time since were running post-haste to heaven, but now are running as fast back again? Do you think those will ever come thither? What! To turn back again to sin, to the world, to the lust of the flesh, to the devil! "It had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment." Those men shall be damned for professing to all the world, that sin is better than Christ; for the man that runs back again, does as good as say, I have tried Christ, and I have tried sin, and I do not find so much profit in Christ as in sin. O sad! What a doom they will have, who were almost at heaven's gates, and then run back again! *If any draweth back, says Christ, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. Again, No man, having set his hand to the plough, that is, set forward in the ways of God, and looking back, turning back again, is fit for the kingdom of heaven; and if not fit for the kingdom of heaven, then for cer-*

tain, he must needs be fit for the fire of hell; and therefore, those that bring forth these apostatizing fruits, as briars and thorns, are rejected, being nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned. If they shall not escape that *neglect*, how shall they escape that *reject*, and turn their back upon, so great salvation? And if the righteous, that is, they that run for it, will find work enough to get to heaven; then where will the ungodly backsliding sinner appear? O if Judas the traitor, or Francis Spira the backslider, were but now alive to tell these men, what it has cost their souls for backsliding, surely it would stick by them.

(4) He that backslides, and he that sits still in sin, are both of one mind; the one will not stir, because he loves his sins; the other runs back again, because he loves the things of this world. Is it not the same thing? Shall not the same hell hold them hereafter?

(5) They that will have heaven, must run for it. This calls aloud to those, that began but a while since to run, to mend their pace, if they intend to win. They who come hindermost, had need to run fastest. There are those, that have run ten years to thy one, and yet will say, they doubt they shall come late enough. How then will it be with thee? Look to it therefore: part speedily with all that is an hinderance to thee in thy journey, and so run that thou mayest obtain.

(6) You that are old professors, take heed that the young striplings of Jesus, that began to strip but the other day, do not out-run you, so as to have that scripture fulfilled on you, *The first shall be last, and the last first*. You that are hindmost, strive to out-run them that are before you: and you that are foremost, hold your ground: that is the right running, for one to strive to out-run another.

(7) How unlikely are they to win, that think it is enough to keep company with the hindmost! If there be but any lazy, slothful, half-hearted professors in the country, they will be sure to take example by them, not considering that the hindmost

most lose the prize. It cost the foolish virgins dear for coming too late. They that were ready went in with him, and the door was shut. Afterwards, mark ! *Afterwards* came the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us ; but he answered, Depart, I know you not. Depart, lazy professors, cold professors, slothful professors. Oh, methinks the word of God is so plain for the overthrow of you lazy professors, that it is to be wondered men do take no more notice of it. How was Lot's wife served for running lazily, and for giving but one look behind her ? It turned her into a pillar of salt ! It made Judas hang himself ! Yea, it will make thee curse the day on which thou wast born, if thou miss the kingdom, as thou wilt certainly do, if this be thy course.

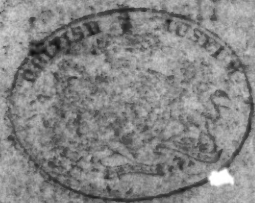
(8) How if thou, by thy lazy running, should not only destroy thyself, but be the cause of the damnation of some others ? He is a professor, say they, and yet he seeks pleasures, profits, &c. and professes he is going to heaven ; yea, he saith also, he does not fear but he shall have entertainment : let us therefore keep pace with him, we shall fare no worse than he. Look to it, thou wilt have strength little enough, to give account of the loss of thy own soul : thou needest not have to give an account, why thou didst stop others from entering in. How wilt thou answer that, *You would not enter in yourselves ; and them that would, you hindered ?* For that saying will be eminently fulfilled on them, that through their own idleness do keep themselves out of heaven, and by giving others the same example hinder them also.

(9) I beseech you, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that none of you do run so lazily in the way to heaven, as to hinder either yourselves or others. If a man should venture, when he is running for his life, to step aside out of his way to pick up a straw, thou wouldst condemn him : and dost thou not condemn thyself, that dost worse, that loiterest in thy race ; notwithstanding thy soul, heaven, glory, and all are at stake ? Have a care, have

have a care, poor wretched sinner, have a care. Look unto Jesus, who is not only the author and finisher of faith, but who did, for the joy that was set before him, endure the cross, despise the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of God, Heb. xii. 2.

Now, that you may be provoked to run with the foremost, take notice of this. It is said, that Lot's wife, looking back from behind him, became a pillar of salt; and yet we do not read, that he did so much as once look what was become of her: his heart was indeed upon his journey, as well it might; there was the mountain before him, and the fire and brimstone behind him: his life lay at stake; and he had lost it, if he had but looked behind him. Do thou so run. In thy race, remember Lot's wife, and her doom; remember for what that doom did overtake her: remember that God made her an example for all lazy runners to the end of the world; and take heed thou fall not after the same example.

If this will not provoke thee, consider (1) *Thy soul* is either to be saved or lost: thou shalt not lose *my* soul by thy laziness: it is *thy own* soul. What shall it profit a man, if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? (2) If *thou* lose thy soul, it is *thou* also that must bear the blame. (3) If thou wilt not run, the people of God are resolved to leave thee behind. It may be, thou hast a father, brother, &c. going post-haste to heaven; wouldst thou be willing to be left behind them? Well then, sinner, wilt thou run? Art thou resolved to strip, or art thou not? Then quickly, man; delay not in this matter. Confer not with flesh and blood. Look up to heaven, and see how thou likest it; also to hell, of which thou mayest understand something in my book called, *The Groans of a damned Soul*. If thou dost not know the way, enquire at the Word of God. If thou wantest company, cry for God's Spirit. If thou wantest encouragement, entertain the promises. But be sure, thou begin betimes, get into the way, run apace, and hold out to the end. And the Lord give thee a prosperous journey. Farewel.



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Swear not at all,

Saith the LORD GOD
of Heaven and Earth.

AR T thou without God in the world?
Hast thou no knowledge of God? No
concern about him? Is not God in all thy
thoughts?

“Dost thou believe there is a God? Where?
In Heaven only? Nay, He filleth all in all.
“Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and
“not a God afar off? Can any hide himself
“in secret places, that I shall not see him?
“Do not I fill heaven and earth?”

Whither wilt thou go then from his Spirit?
Or whither wilt thou flee from his presence?
If thou go up into Heaven, God is there. If
thou

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thou go into Hell, he is there also. If thou take the wings of the morning, and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there his hand shall touch thee, and God's right hand shall hold thee.

God seeth thee now: His eyes are upon thee: He observes all thy thoughts: He compasseth thy path: He counteth all thy steps: He is acquainted with all thy ways: By him actions are weighed: Nor is there a word in thy tongue, but he knoweth it altogether.

And does not Power belong unto God? Yea, all Power in Heaven and in Earth! Is He not able, even while thou readeest or hearest these words, to crush thee into nothing? Can he not just now crumble thee into dust? or bid the earth open and swallow thee up? O do not set him at nought! Do not provoke him thus! Do not fly in his face! Can he not, in a moment, cast forth his Lightnings and tear thee? shoot forth his Arrows and consume thee? What hinders him from cutting thee off this instant? Sending thee now, now, quick into Hell?

Would God do thee any wrong therein? What! in giving thee the request of thy own lips?

lips ? What words were those thou spakest but now ? Did not God hear ? Why, thou didst pray to God to send thee to Hell. Thou didst ask him to damn thy soul. How ! Art thou in love with damnation ? Art thou in haste to dwell with everlasting burnings ? To be day and night tormented in that flame, without a drop of water to cool thy tongue ?

I had rather thou shouldest go to the Paradise of God. Hadst not thou ? Is not Heaven better than Hell ? Art thou not convinced of this in thy own conscience ? Why then amend, thy prayer : Cry to God, “ Save
 “ my soul, for I have sinned against thee :
 “ save me from all my sins. Save me from
 “ all my evil tempers and evil desires ! Make
 “ me holy as thou art holy ! Let me know
 “ thee, and love thee, and serve thee, now
 “ and forever ! ”

And is not God willing to do this ? Surely he is : for God loveth thee. He gave his only Son that thou mightest not perish, but have everlasting life. Christ died for *thee*. And he that believeth on him *hath* everlasting life. Mark that word : he hath it. He hath it *now*. He hath the beginning of heaven even upon earth ;

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earth; for his soul is filled with the love of God: and the love of God is heaven. He that truly believes on Jesus Christ, hath a peace which earth cannot give: his mind is always calm; he hath learned in every state therewith to be content: he is always easy, quiet, well-pleased: always happy in life and in death. For a believer is not afraid to die: he desires to be dissolved and to be with Christ: he desires to quit this house of clay, and to be carried by angels into Abraham's bosom; to hear the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God, and to see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven; to stand at his right hand, and hear that word (which I earnestly beg of God you and I may hear;) "Come, ye blessed, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world!"

F I N I S.